

**MINUTES OF THE
PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE MEETING
FEBRUARY 12, 2002**

The Proficiency Testing Committee of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met by teleconference on Tuesday, February 12, 2002, at 1:00 p.m., Eastern Standard Time (EST). The meeting was led by Chairperson Ms. Barbara Burmeister of the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene. A list of action items is given in Attachment A and the list of participants is given in Attachment B. *The purpose of the meeting was to address items of importance identified in the committee's previously distributed meeting agenda.*

INTRODUCTION

The teleconference was started by Ms. Burmeister taking the attendance roll call.

AGENDA/MINUTES/ACTION ITEM REVIEW

Minutes of the January 22, 2002, teleconference were reviewed and accepted as written. The action items were reviewed and status shown on Attachment B.

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

Revised Field of Proficiency Testing Tables

PT Reporting Limits Subcommittee Report - Ms. Mary Kay Steinman reported that she has received no comments to date from members of the subcommittee. It was suggested that a teleconference be scheduled with the subcommittee for the week of January 28, 2002, to discuss various opinions regarding PT reporting limits.

Radiochemistry FOT Subcommittee Report - Dr. John Griggs reported that the membership of this subcommittee is almost complete. He has invited representatives from the Department of Energy (DoE), states, laboratories, PT providers and the EPA. Ms. Burmeister reported that she received a call from Mr. Cliff Watkins who is a consultant for the National Analytical Management Program (NAMP) program. He stated that DoE runs two PT programs and they may be interested in pursuing approval of their PT programs under NELAC. Ms. Burmeister will contact Mr. Watkins and provide him with the information needed to proceed.

Problematic Analytes and Acceptance Criteria Update

Status of PT Study Data - Ms. Burmeister reported that no additional data has been received to date from the PT Providers. She will send a final request for data and report results at the next teleconference.

Preparation Methods - Dr. Larry Jackson is currently out of the country. This topic has been deferred until he returns.

Status of Technology Codes

In Dr. Tom McAninch's absence, it was reported that Dr. McAninch received feedback on his proposed list of technology codes. Suggestions included adding more digits and more flexibility. He is awaiting feedback from Dr. John Griggs and Dr. Anand Mudambi and will schedule a teleconference for next week. This subject has been deferred for discussion at the next teleconference.

Additions to Master Analyte and Method Code Lists

Dr. Ralph Obenauf reported that his group is working on this list. The estimated time of completion is two to three weeks.

Options Regarding PT Frequency

Costs of PT Samples - The committee needs accurate data regarding the true costs of proficiency testing. This includes not only the costs of the PT samples, but also staff analysis time, reagent/equipment costs and administrative time. Dr. Ralph Obenauf will contact Mr. Art Burton of Sequoia Laboratories to discuss the costs per proficiency test per technology. He will also contact someone from STL to also provide this kind of information.

States/Laboratories Not Adopting NELAC Due to PT Frequency - It was reported that the NELAP Accrediting Authorities (AA) Committee has discussed why various state programs and laboratories are not joining NELAC. They are in the process of forming a subcommittee or workgroup to discuss what is hindering both state and laboratory participation. Two possible issues for non-participation are (1) the laboratories do not understand the NELAC requirements or do not know what should be implemented, i.e., Standard Operating Procedures, etc., and (2) the cost of proficiency tests for small laboratories. Ms. Burmeister will contact Ms. Jeanne Hankins for the status of the AA Workgroup effort and to further discuss what the PT Committee can do to help. More credible data is required before the committee can truly evaluate PT frequency. Therefore the committee cannot propose any new language for ratification at NELAC 8.

A comment was received from Ms. Marilyn Thornton of EPA Region 4 regarding the definition of the 12-month period in one of Dr. Kircher's options. Since the committee has deferred any new language regarding PT frequency, this comment will not be addressed at this time.

"Six Month" FAQ - NELAP AA Response -

Ms. RaeAnn Haynes reported that the NELAP AA Workgroup discussed the FAQ and referred it back to the PT Committee for further clarification. She will rewrite the FAQ in a form that the AAs would like using their suggested language. Upon completion, she will forward a copy to Ms. Steinman and the committee for review.

Comments/Questions Received

Scott Hoatson, Del Mar Analytical – 2 of 3 PT Passing Requirement Clarification - A comment was received from Mr. Scott Hoatson of Del Mar Analytical Laboratories regarding the interpretation

of the 2 of 3 PT passing requirement. There appears to be a problem with how a NELAP Accrediting Authority is interpreting the 2 of 3 proficiency testing passing requirement language. It was reported that this issue was discussed in a recent NELAP AA teleconference and an incorrect interpretation issue does exist. Ms. Burmeister will contact Ms. Hankins to discuss how the committee should proceed.

Ilona Taunton, TestAmerica – QC Standards for PTs - A comment was received from Ms. Ilona Taunton of TestAmerica regarding the use of QC standards when analyzing PT samples for NELAC accreditation purposes. She is very concerned that PT providers are advertising the analysis of known QC standards in the same run as PT samples. This is in direct conflict with the NELAC standard that states that labs must run PT samples with normal samples. The committee agrees with Ms. Taunton's concerns regarding advertising QC standards. Ms. Haynes will advise the NELAP AA Workgroup of the wrongful practice. Ms. Burmeister will propose new language for the NELAC Standards.

Tom Coyner, APG – Electronic transfer of PT data

Mr. Tom Coyner reported that there is a problem with transmitting data electronically to the AAs. The electronic formats required by most states expect method codes and method descriptions. Laboratories are required to report a method description and if their description does not match the description of the PT provider, the data is rejected and causes problems for the PT provider. Ms. Burmeister will contact Mr. Coyner and request more information.

Jane Jensen, California ELAP – Quick response PT samples

This comment was referred to the Quick Response PT Study subcommittee who is chaired by Dr. Anand Mudambi.

Vanaja Sivakumar, SPEX Certiprep – State of Louisiana electronic data requirements

Ms. Vanaja Sivakumar reported that all PT providers received a letter from the state of Louisiana with requirements for electronically transmitting PT data to Louisiana. The requirements for the method and analyte codes do not match the codes developed by the NELAC PT Committee. This will result in additional costs for PT providers to meet these requirements. Ms. Burmeister will contact Mr. Louis Johnson of Louisiana for clarification and hopefully modification of the requirements.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned as the allotted teleconference time expired.

NEXT MEETING

The next PT committee teleconference is scheduled for February 26, 2002, at 1:00 p.m., EST.

**ACTION ITEMS
PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE MEETING
FEBRUARY 12, 2002**

Item No.	Action	Date to be Completed
1	Contact Mr. Cliff Watkins to provide him with the information needed to proceed. (Burmeister)	02/26/02
2	PT Reporting Limit Subcommittee Report to PT Committee and response to Dancziger comment (Steinman)	02/26/02
3	Develop Technology Codes (McAninch, Mudambi, Griggs)	02/26/02
4	Respond to analyte and method code comment (Obenauf)	02/26/02
5	Send PT Provider email list to Dr. Mudambi (Burmeister)	Complete
5	Schedule a meeting of the quick response PT subcommittee and report progress to PT Committee (Mudambi)	02/26/02
6	Establish a subcommittee on radiochemistry PT and discuss radiochemistry acceptance criteria (Griggs)	02/26/02
7	Final request to PT Providers for requested data (Burmeister)	02/26/02
8	Send "six month" FAQ rewrite to MaryKay Steinman and committee. (Haynes)	02/26/02
9	Costs of PT Samples per technology (Obenauf)	03/12/02
10	Contact Ms. Jeanne Hankins for status of NELAP AA Workgroup effort and regarding standard interpretation issue. (Burmeister)	02/26/02
11	Propose new language for QC standards analysis issue. (Burmeister)	03/12/02
12	Contact Mr. Tom Coyner for additional information regarding electronic method codes and method descriptions. (Burmeister)	02/26/02
13	Contact Mr. Louis Johnson regarding Louisiana electronic data requirements. (Burmeister)	02/26/02

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PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE MEETING
FEBRUARY 12, 2002**

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